will also improve the employment prospects of the khadi spinners and weavers.

Macro level thrust areas of agro and rural industries

2100. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the major macro level thrust areas of agro and rural industries and to what extent they have been achieved;

(b) whether a comprehensive and thorough study was made to identify the weak and grey areas in this sector and the initiatives taken to correct the deficiencies;

(c) whether enough priority and importance of this sector has been ensured to implement the corrective measures; and

(d) whether there will be a time frame to set right the deficiencies identified?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) Generation of additional employment in rural areas, creation of self-employment opportunities for the educated unemployed youth, adoption of market-oriented approach in the khadi and village industries (KVIs) sector, increase in production and sates of khadi, coir and village industry products, increase in export of coir products, etc., are some of the macro-level thrust areas in the agro and rural industries (AIRs) sector.

(b) and (c) Studies have been undertaken, from time to time, *to* assess the status of implementation of various programmes in the KVI and coir sectors, Corrective action has also been taken, based on the feedback of such studies as well as the implementing agencies. Further, the Government has been providing support to this sector to help it remain competitive and export-oriented in the globalising economy. These measures include providing facilities for quality control of products, financial assistance for participation in national and international exhibitions, assistance for technology upgradation, research and development, etc.

The sector has continued to receive priority as can be judged from the fact that budgetary allocation has increased from Rs. 522.42 crore (actual) in 2002-03 to Rs. 967 crore (BE) in 2006-07. Moreover, the total value of production and employment generated in these sectors have increased by 22.08 per cent and 14.67 per cent during 2002-03 to 2004-05.

(d) The-process of analysing and correcting deficiencies is, however, continuous and it is not feasible to set specific time limits in a dynamic environment.

Role of khadi and village industries

2101. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the role of khadi and village industries play in rural economy and employment at present and whether it has been quantified;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the progress made in khadi and village industries during the last three years;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) the measures being taken to promote and to popularize the khadi and village industries;

(f) the Plan and non-Plan budgetary support given and the flow of institutional finance during the last three years as against its requirements; and

(g) the core reasons for the decline and fall of this sector?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) The khadi and village industries play a significant role in income generation and creation of additional off-farm employment opportunities in rural areas. The value of production and employment in the khadi and village industries (KVIs) sector during 2004-05 was estimated at Rs. 10920.43 crore (Rs. 461.54 crore - khadi and Rs. 10458.89 crore - village industries) and 76.78 lakh persons respectively.